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ABSTRACT

In response to concerns about the high turnover of California community college chief executive officers (CEOs), the California Community College Trustees' (CCCT) board of the League conducted a study to determine the extent of the turnover problem and its possible consequences. In the first phase of the project, information was gathered on chief executive officers from the founding of each college to 1984. In the second phase, a survey was sent to each CEO (including district chancellors, superintendent/presidents, and individual college campus presidents) in the state asking for updated information through 1996. The study's findings indicated that there is no real difference between the annual turnover rate of California CEOs and those in other states (13 percent versus 12 percent annually). The concerns about the high turnover rate that prompted the study may be related to the finding that 1994 and 1995 were higher than average years for turnover. However, the tenure/service length of California CEOs is: (1) lower than that of CEOs in comparable institutions nationwide (4.3 vs. 7.5 years, respectively); and (2) has been declining, indicating a need to look closely at circumstances surrounding CEO retention in California. Contains 16 references. (KS)

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Community College League of California

First Biennial Report on California Community College Chief Executive Officer(CEO) Tenure and Retention

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Introduction and Background

In Spring 1995, as the chancellor positions at San Francisco, Los Angeles, Chabot-Las Positas, Contra Costa, Los Rios and Foothill-DeAnza community college districts were either vacant or about to be vacated, the leadership of California chief executive officers of the community colleges noted that an estimated 47 of 129 CEO positions in the California Community College system turned over between July 1, 1994 and April 21, 1995. In response to this information, the California Community College Trustees' (CCCT) board of the League held a mini-retreat in January 1996 to discuss these concerns with a panel comprised of a new CEO (Tim Dong), a long-experienced CEO (George Boggs), and a CEO who moved from a presidency to a chancellorship (Jeanne Atherton), and moderated by Jack Randall (a retired CEO). As a result of this discussion, the CCCT board initiated several activities, including a staff study to determine the extent of the turnover problem and its possible consequences, with a goal to improve the recruitment and retention of effective CEOs at all levels.

Literature Review

Concerns about the role and tenure of presidents of higher education institutions have echoed throughout higher education administrative literature, with a recent article in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* citing a 1934 article on academic management as illustrative: "The administration of our colleges and universities is being put to a severe test .. in trying to maintain high standards of instruction within reduced income."

Within the last ten years, there have been several studies of turnover at both two-year and four-year colleges. George Vaughan (1986) reported on a national study of 591 survey responses from community college presidents and 96 interviews on the presidency with presidents, their spouses, trustees, and others. This study found that the average number of years in the current position had dropped from 7.2 in 1964 to 4.2 in 1970, but the author warned that this data could be somewhat misleading because of the rapid growth in higher education over these years and the higher average tenure – 9.4 years – of presidents considered leaders by their peers.

In 1987, the CCCT board proposed a study, *Selecting a Community College Chief Executive Officer: The Investigation and Development of An Exemplary Process*, and the staff joined with the San Diego State University Foundation to draft a proposal which, in its introduction, noted:

> "The turnover in this position [community college CEO] has been substantial in recent years. During the past five years, 49 CEO searches have been conducted representing 70% of all CEO positions. Fully half (35) of the districts have hired a new CEO in that time period, with seven of the districts having hired two CEOs during the five-year period. Additionally, 18 CEOs have been dismissed from their positions within the past five years. Ten of these administrators had been in their positions for less than five years. The substantial amount of turnover suggests that the position is a difficult one to achieve longevity and that the selection process is highly suspect, given the rapid turnover within a relatively short time frame (5 years)."

The trustees were unsuccessful in their attempt to gain funding for the proposed study; thus, they did not reach any conclusions about this issue.

Ross et. al. (1993), surveyed college and university presidents over a five-year period (1986-90) to learn about changes over time in the college presidency. The authors found:

- The length of tenure for presidents of four-year colleges had increased over this period (from 6.3 years in 1986 to 6.7 years in 1990);
- The average tenure for presidents of two-year colleges was five years;
- There was an increase in the numbers of women and a slower increase in the percentages of minorities serving as college presidents;
- 53 percent of presidents had served five years or more in their current position; but among them were a number who had served significantly longer, thus skewing the overall average upward;
- Of the 47 percent of presidents who had been in their office for five years or less in 1990, twelve percent were in their first year and 36 percent had held their positions for three years or less.

The study also showed that presidents of four-year public colleges remain in office for less time than those in private institutions of higher education.

Authors of the ACE study noted continuing concerns over presidential turnover; however, they explicitly recognized that there is uncertainty on the appropriate tenure length for presidents. James Fisher (1984) suggested that "there appears to be a point of diminishing returns for most leaders – a point in time beyond which they lose effectiveness." He believed that six to ten years is maximum for presidents to exert effective leadership.

Clark Kerr (1984) observed that the average tenure of a university president is seven years while the average tenure of a community college president is only five years. He saw no ideal term for a president, noting that it depends on the individual and the situation of the institution, but he made the following comment and suggestion:

> "Presidential terms now average approximately seven years; this is too short to serve effectively some of the major interests of an institution. Each board should structure the presidential relationship toward a longer term than now typically exists between the president and the institution. This means giving careful attention particularly to the selection of and to the support for the president, but also to conditions that can enhance longer tenure of positions."

While some commentators express concern about the potential turmoil which can result from a change of leadership, others cite a greater potential for resistance to change if presidents remain in place over a lengthy period.

In June 1992, *The Chronicle of Higher Education* noted the "spate of resignations" among prominent university presidents when the chief executives of Columbia, Duke, Stanford, and Yale Universities as well as the Universities of California, Chicago, and Texas announced their resignations within a one-year period. *The Chronicle* questioned whether this was a disturbing pattern or a mere coincidence. While some observers saw this as a pattern signifying underlying

structural problems, others – including some who had themselves served as presidents – saw the changes as reflective of the turnover of an age cohort. To bolster their opinion, the latter group noted that most of the retiring presidents had served far longer than average. (Their data indicate the average presidential term ranges from three to seven years, depending on the type and control of each institution.)

In response to that concern about CEO turnover a study was conducted by John Minter Associates of Boulder Colorado and Frederick Hafner, President of Higher Education Publications. Their study examined the turnover rate and length of service in a variety of higher education job categories, including chief executive officer, and the study found that, contrary to suggestions that presidents were leaving their jobs faster than in the past, there actually was little change in the turnover rate from one year to the next. Their finding was that, on average, 14 percent of the presidents (all higher education institutions) and 12 percent of two-year college CEOs left their jobs each year; the average tenure in the eight-year period studied (1984-85 through 1991-92) also stayed the same, i.e., about seven years.

In commenting on the study, staff of the Association of Governing Boards who worked on presidential searches noted that this study showed the danger of making assumptions based on one year of data. While 23 percent (an unusually high number) of presidents had left private, doctorate-granting universities in 1989-90, the turnover for the same group in 1991-92 was only six percent – the lowest in eight years. However, it was the 1991-92 year which had occasioned the study because those leaving were highly visible presidents. The study showed similar swings between 1990-91 and 1991-92 for public doctorate-granting universities.

At the same time, William E. (Bud) Davis, Chancellor of Louisiana State University collected data on presidents of major public research institutions for the National Association of State University and Land Grant Colleges. His data showed that the average tenure of presidents of member-institutions was 3.2 years in 1992, down from 4.6 years in 1980. Davis speculated that the shorter tenures were related to experiences of intense scrutiny and working for governing boards that had become increasing politicized.

In the three-month period from June to August 1995, the American Association of Community College Presidents' Academy Executive Committee conducted "The Presidential Separation Survey," which was mailed to 1046 presidents of AACC member-colleges. A sample of 617 presidents responded. However, the data available to date do not appear relevant to this study, as the AACC study focused on the effect of a president's contract status upon turnover in that office.

The Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges established a new national Commission on the Academic Presidency to address the charge: *Is the present system of governing American colleges and universities up to the demands of today and the foreseeable future? If not, what needs to change?* In the report which followed, commission members stated that,

> The greatest danger we see is that in this new era of growing doubts and demands, colleges and universities are neither as nimble nor as adaptable as the times require. Why? Because the academic presidency has become weak. The authority

> of college and university presidents is being undercut by all of its partners – trustees, faculty members, and political leaders – and, at times, by the presidents' own lack of assertiveness and willingness to take risks for change. (Baliles, 1996)

In 1997, students from the USC School of Public Administration used data from the CEOCCC Tenure and Retention Study to determine whether California community college CEO turnover was increasing. Using "line of best-fit" and linear trend analysis, the students concluded that the average decline in the tenure for the 71 chancellors and superintendent/president CEOs was .09 years per year. They then charted two linear trend projections, for the twelve-year period before, and the seven-year period after, enactment of AB 1725. This test indicated that there was no radical shift in the decline since the implementation of AB 1725 and shared governance (Estilai, et al., 1997).

Finally, the American Council on Education, Center for Leadership Development has just updated and published its presidential tenure data. These data represent a subset of 755 (or 79%) of the 957 CEOs surveyed. For this subset, the average length of tenure of presidents of two-year institutions has increased from 5.0 to 7.8 years between 1990 and 1995.

Methodology

Throughout this study, League staff have consulted with the RP Group, the professional organization of research and planning professionals of the California Community Colleges. They have assisted with the methodology, monitored the study, and provided technical advice and analysis. In addition, the CEOCCC and CCCT Boards of the League as well as the Advisory Commission on Educational Services have reviewed the report on a regular basis.

The first portion of data collection was to gather initial information on the CEOs from the founding of each college to 1984 by using information compiled by Dr. Tom Fryer, Chancellor of Foothill-DeAnza CCD and President of the CEOCCC board in 1984. A survey form then was sent to each CEO in the state (including district chancellors, superintendent/presidents, and individual college campus presidents) asking for updated information to 1996. (Since that time, the League has continued to update the information manually as CEOs change.) Both the "Fryer Directory" and the new data were integrated and a copy was sent to every CEO to verify their accuracy.

Once the verification was completed, the data were summarized and tabulated for six different groups. These groups were:

- The CEO (whether a chancellor or superintendent/president) of each of the 71 districts over the past twenty years, with interim CEOs excluded;
- The same 71 CEOs with interim CEOs included;
- All 129 CEOs (including chancellors, superintendent/presidents, and campus presidents in multi-campus districts), with all interim CEOs excluded;

- The same 129 CEOs as in #3 with interim CEOs included;
- The 58 presidents from multi-college districts over the past twenty years, with interim presidents excluded; and
- The same 58 presidents as in #5 with interim presidents included.

In reviewing and presenting the data, League staff primarily used the group of 71 CEOs (chancellors and superintendent/presidents) for analysis, with interim CEOs excluded. This choice was made for extended review because these are the 71 CEOs who deal directly with boards. Interim CEOs were excluded for two reasons: (a) they may be more likely to skew the distribution, because by its nature and purpose, the position is short-term and (b) the concerns about CEO turnover focussed on those hired as permanent CEOs. Thus, most data presented in this report are for the 71 CEOs only; however, we include Tables II-A-2 and II-A-3 on the mean years of service for the 58 and 129 CEOs for the information of those interested in these data. With recognition that there were many reasons—some positive and others negative—for CEOs to change positions, we proceeded to determine the immediate causes of changes. In order to do so, five current or retired CEOs (Tom Van Groningen, Jack Randall, John Petersen, Dianne Van Hook, and Ed Simonsen) were selected to review our data sheets and indicate the "real"—rather than the publicly-stated—reason why each CEO departed, over a twenty-year period. The choices were: retired or died in office (i.e., a neutral reason for leaving); left under fire or did not have contract renewed; left to take another CEO position in California (usually at a larger institution); left to take a position out of state; left for more than one reason (i.e., took a position out of state, but was under fire). We also coded for "came to California from out-of-state" and "left to take an out-of-state position" to determine whether there was a net inflow or outflow of talent to/from California.

In addition, two national search consultants familiar with both California and nation-wide CEO searches were interviewed to gain their perceptions on conditions in California compared with other states.

Findings

California CEO Tenure and Retention Data

Following is a series of tables which summarize the data of the California CEO Tenure and Retention Study. Table I, *Analysis of 71 California Community College District CEOs, Number Leaving by Year, 1976-1996*, provides the raw data on the numbers of CEOs who have left their positions annually. When the numbers of CEOs leaving per year are analyzed by five-year blocks, they average 8.8 (12.4%) for 1976-1980; 9.4 (13.2%) for 1981-85; 8.4 (11.8%) for 1986-90; and 10.4 (14.6%) for 1991-1995; with an overall average of 13%. National data (AGB, 1992) found that from academic year 1984-85 to 1991-92, there was little change in the annual turnover rate, with 12% of two-year CEOs leaving their jobs each year. For the same eight-year period, the California community college CEOs' turnover rate was 13.1%.

Table II-A-1, *Analysis of 71 CCC District CEOs, Mean (Average) Number of Years of Service, 1976-1996*, summarizes the length of service for community college district CEOs in California, by year, over the past twenty years. Tables II-A-2 and II-A-3 present the same data for the 58

presidents of colleges in multi-campus districts and 129 CEOs (the 58 presidents and the 71 superintendent/presidents and chancellors), respectively.

Tables II-B and II-C provide information on the median and the mode for the 71 district CEOs. The data show that the length of service for these 71 CEOs is dropping over this period, with a mean term length of 6.4 years for 1976 through 1980; 5.5 years for 1981-1985, 5.3 years for 1986-1990; 5.0 years for 1991-1995, and a 20-year mean of 5.5 years.

When an analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted on the five-year blocks (i.e., 1976-1980, 1981-1985, etc.) for the 71 CEOs, it yielded an F value of 19.845, which was significant at the .001 level. Post ANOVA comparisons using Fisher's LSD (the least conservative approach) found significant differences ($p<.001$) between the mean for the first block (1976-1980) and the other three time blocks.

In the remaining (i.e., post-1980) five-year time blocks, no other differences were significant. This indicates that the length of tenure for the five year time-block of 1976-1980 differs from any of the later time blocks and that this is not likely due to chance. Thus, one can surmise that there are post-1980 factors which are responsible for the drop in length of tenure — but this analysis does not indicate what these factors are, nor is it clear that we can determine with certainty what they might be.

The California data in Table II-A-1 contrasts with that in Table II-D, *California vs. National Data, 1970-1996,* which provides a comparison of our data with data collected by the American Council on Education and George Vaughan for their respective studies of the presidency. The most compelling item of interest is that both ACE and the Vaughan data indicate that the national length of tenure is rising, while length of tenure in California continues to drop. When a one-sample t test was run between the sample (California) mean and the reported population means of 7.5 (Vaughan) and 7.8 (ACE), both differences were significant ($p<.001$).

Table II-A-2 presents data on the average tenure/service of the 58 college presidents in the California Community College system. These are presidents of colleges within multi-campus districts, who report to their chancellor who, in turn, reports to the local board of trustees. These data reveal a flatter line (when compared with the 71 CEOs who report directly to boards of trustees) for average tenure over the past twenty years. Except for the 1996 year, the line is virtually flat, rather than dropping as the "71-CEO" curve does.

Table II-A-3 combines the data from Tables II-A-1 and II-A-2 to present information on service for all 129 CEOs in the California community college system.

Tables III-A-D, *Reasons for Leaving,* chart the reasons why each of the 71 CEOs left his/her position over the past twenty years. A best fit regression line for Table III-A (died or retired) shows a slight downward slope toward more recent years, indicating that fewer CEOs in recent years are dying or retiring in office. However, when a chi square test of good fit is attempted, the numbers are not statistically significant. For Table III-B (Contract Not Renewed/Left under Fire) the best-fit regression line shows a slight upward slope toward more recent years, indicating that

somewhat more CEOs leave due to non-renewal of their contract or under fire; the increase, however, is not statistically significant.

Table IV-A, *Districts with CEOs in Place for Ten or More Years, 1997*, provides the names of districts and CEOs who have served ten years or more in California as of October 1997. Tables IV-B, *Districts with CEOs in Place for Ten or More Years, 1987*, and IV-C, *Districts with CEOs in Place for Ten or More Years, 1977*, provide similar information for two earlier years at ten-year intervals. The year 1977 was one year prior to passage of Proposition 13 which severely cut property tax revenues to schools, cities, counties, and community colleges in California; 1987 was one year prior to enactment of AB 1725. The data indicate that, in 1977, the number of California community college CEOs who had held their positions for ten or more years was 20 (28 percent) of the CEOs – that number and percentage dropped to 13 (18 percent), respectively, in 1987, and to nine (12.7 percent), respectively, in 1997. (This compares with a national average for community college presidents serving ten years or more of forty percent in 1926, down to twenty percent by 1986 [Donnelly, 1993]. In 1986, the California percentage was 19.7.

Table V, *California Community College Districts by Number of CEO Changes, 1977-1997*, provides descriptive information showing the distribution of districts with more or fewer district CEO changes over the past twenty years. These data reveal nine districts with two CEOs; 25 districts with three CEOs; 22 districts with four CEOs; eleven districts with five CEOs; and four districts with six CEOs, over the twenty-year period of 1977-1997.

Table VI, *CCC CEOs Who Came From, or Left to Go, Out-of-State, 1987-1997*, provides the names of district CEOs who have come from other states and/or have left their positions to take a new position out-of-state in the years studied. These data were summarized to determine whether the net flow of CEOs has been into or out of California in those years. They show that more CEOs (23) came into the state than left it (13); a review of the names of those who left indicates that the majority came to California for one position and then left the state, often returning to their "home" state.

The League also has summary data, by district, of the years of service for each of the 71 district CEOs over a twenty-year period. It shows the specific years in which changes occurred on a district-by-district basis. These data are available from the League upon request.

Perceptions of Search Consultants

Another avenue which League staff pursued was to question individuals familiar with California community college CEO searches. The interviews consisted of a request for open-ended reflection comparing the characteristics of California candidates, boards, and searches to those outside the state, followed by more specific questions on the quality and quantity of candidates, perceptions of the California situation, and suggestions for possible changes within the control of trustees.

The perceptions of the consultants included:

- There is slightly, but not significantly, more turnover of California community college CEOs than the national turnover rate.

- The pools for California CEO searches are slightly smaller than in other states, but the quality remains high.

- Although many pools are smaller than in the past, districts whose boards are seen as educated on their appropriate roles and who have a history of choosing out-of-state candidates continue to have stronger and larger pools than those who are not viewed as having these characteristics.

- There is a perception among both consultants and out-of-state candidates that some California trustees prefer in-state candidates; consequently, out-of-state candidates are somewhat less likely to apply for these positions in California districts. The preference for in-state candidates was described as "parochialism" and is believed to be bias toward candidates who already have worked with California laws, regulations, and funding formulas.

- In recent years, out-of state candidates have been more reluctant to consider California positions due to the fiscal problems of the state, but this is easing with the last three years' budgets.

- The consultants do not express major concerns about the California recruitment situation; on the contrary, they believe that there are significant numbers of quality candidates and urge trustees to focus more on quality than quantity in the pools.

- In commenting on efforts that could be undertaken by trustees and are under their control to improve recruitment and retention of CEOs, consultants recommend that boards of trustees be "a little more open and creative," especially about housing (they report that 27% of districts nationwide provide housing assistance), especially toward candidates from out-of-state or those from lower-priced areas of California.

Discussion

This study was motivated by many concerns expressed about apparent rapid turnover and the suggestions that it was due to the challenges of shared governance, difficulties in working with local boards, lack of state support, over-regulation, or other problems. This discussion will review and comment on the variety of measures included in this study.

Turnover Rates

First, the data show that there is no real difference between the annual turnover rates of California CEOs and those in other states (13 percent vs. 12 percent annually) when viewed over time. On the average, the percentage of hires in California is essentially the same as it is nationally. However, given the significantly higher number of California CEOs than in other states, the same percentage reflects significantly more openings.

Second, the concerns about the high turnover rate that prompted this study may be related to the finding that 1994 and 1995 were higher than average years for turnover. The number of

vacancies and new hires appears to be cyclical, with a high number of vacancies for a year or two, followed by fewer than average for the next few years. Therefore, the rate of change in any one year should be viewed in the context of a longer term. There may be many reasons for a higher or lower rate, and any one- or two-year peak or low point should not be used to draw any conclusions about the CEO turnover rate.

There are many possible reasons for the variability in the turnover rate and they interact with one another. No one or two reasons are the sole contributors to turnover. National studies have found concerns similar to those expressed in California when high turnover occurred in prestigious colleges and universities throughout the country in a single year. However, when the data are reviewed in context, these studies have concluded that a cohort of CEOs retired in a particular year as part of a general pattern of increases and decreases in turnover by year. These rises and declines then lead to a new cohort of CEOs who also are likely to resign within a relatively small timeframe, as the next cycle begins.

Another anomaly which tends to create concern is the phenomenon of several highly-visible CEOs or CEOs from highly-ranked institutions who retire or resign within a limited space of time. Again, further analysis usually indicates that the high profile of the individuals or their institutions, rather than a definitive and identifiable problem, has created the impression that there is a high turnover rate.

Difficult fiscal times also may be a factor in motivating CEOs to retire or leave their positions. A look at the data on California CEO departure patterns shows parallels between the early 90's in California and the 70's in this state --- both very difficult fiscal times for higher education. The early 90's saw a severe recession in California which lingered far longer than in other states. The late 70's ushered in Proposition 13 and the California "tax revolt" which has maintained its power in California and severely cut local property taxes, the primary funding base for schools and community colleges. These types of fiscal deficiencies create protracted struggles with some long-term CEOs choosing to retire or leave the state, but they are problems not unique to higher education or community colleges. Rather, they are a reflection of the times.

Major changes in governance and administrative structures and processes may motivate CEOs to consider leaving. The creation of a board of governors, the shift from local to state control of funding (through passage of Proposition 13), the proliferation of categorical and targeted funding, the advent of collective bargaining, and the shift to shared governance, all require somewhat different leadership approaches.

Today there are great changes in the labor market, and in California today's average worker is likely to experience five different careers (not five different jobs) in his/her lifetime. Are/should community college CEOs be exempt from this trend? Or should community colleges be expected to be a more stable environment for executives than other institutions in society?

One can also postulate that the pace of life, continuing change, and demographic diversity create a unique synergistic force that makes California different from any other states. Thus, possibly the only appropriate comparison groups for California community college CEOs would be CEOs at other public California institutions of higher education, such as the University of California;

CEOs of major, fast-paced California companies in the private sector; and California CEOs in other public sectors (such as city managers).

Third, the finding that more district chancellors have come to California from out-of-state than have left the state for CEO positions suggests that California is still an attractive place to work. The perceptions of search consultants suggest that while the number of applicants may be fewer, the quality of the candidates is equivalent to the pools in other states. While there may be a general perception that there is a higher CEO turnover rate in California, that perception does not appear to have lowered the quality of candidates or the willingness to move to California. The single factor which appears to contribute to the willingness to come into the state is the particular set of conditions, including willingness to hire a non-Californian, at individual districts.

Tenure/Service Length

On the other hand, tenure/service length for California community college CEOs: (a) is lower than that of CEOs in comparable institutions nationwide (4.3 vs. 7.5, respectively), and (b) has been declining, indicate there is a need to look closely at circumstances surrounding CEO retention. The challenges outlined at the beginning of the discussion section are among the many reasons which may account for the decline in the average length of tenure of a California Community College chief executive officer. These possible causes should be explored further through interviews or analyses of districts defined as unstable.

Analysis of other data indicates that some districts may have difficulties retaining CEOs. Future research could be conducted comparing districts with higher numbers of CEOs over twenty years with more stable districts to determine the nature of circumstances which distinguish community college districts with more stable and those with less stable CEO positions.

In addition, the turnover rates described above might affect tenure rates. When there are peaks in vacancies, there is more opportunity for CEOs to move to new positions. Current CEOs could be recruited or opt to take advantage of the greater number of openings and apply for positions perceived to be better at an earlier date than they otherwise may have considered a move. Many commentators recognize explicitly that there is uncertainty on the appropriate tenure length for CEOs. While some commentators stress concern about the potential turmoil which can result from a change of leadership, others cite a great potential for resistance to change if presidents remain in place over a lengthy period. In light of this, what is a "healthy" turnover level for college presidents? One possibility for analysis is establishment of an (admittedly arbitrary) standard, such as five or seven years, which could be selected and a determination made of the effectiveness of those who remain longer than that period of time.

Summary

When viewed in the context of a twenty-year period and compared to national rates, the high turnover rates in 1994 and 1995 that motivated this study have occurred cyclically in the past, and the long-term average turnover rate is similar to national averages. However, the declining length of tenure indicates a need to continue to research and analyze conditions related to CEO retention and tenure. The CEO position and the person who fills it are essential to the success of California's community colleges and the League is committed to continued study into the conditions that support CEO retention and success.

Next Steps and Recommendations

It may be useful to compare our data with states in the Vaughan and ACE studies that have elected or appointed community college boards of trustees, as well as states with similar complexity and strong faculty presence (shared governance or unions), and/or heavy state or accrediting commission oversight, to gain additional perspective.

There are a number of follow-up studies that could be conducted. Among those to be considered by the League are:

- An assessment of districts which had higher-than-average numbers of CEO changes over twenty years to determine why so many changes have occurred and whether there are common elements in causing those changes;
- Examination of presidential data to determine if there are any differences between turnover or tenure patterns of chancellors, district superintendent/presidents and college presidents in multi-campus districts;
- Use of focus groups to gain better understanding of why CEOs left, what would have encouraged them to stay, and their recommendations for changes; and
- Review of the business literature to consider and compare the average length of service of comparable business executives, such as CEOs of the "Fortune 500" companies.

Based on this study, it is recommended that local governing boards:

- Review their districts' history of CEO retention and compare it with similar districts to assess their own level of stability; and
- Identify and address the circumstances related to turnover in their district.

In addition, the League will continue its commitment to:

- Provide trustees and CEOs with resources designed to promote stable board/CEO partnerships; and
- Address fiscal, regulatory, and policy issues that may contribute to leadership instability.

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